



India

India is the world's largest democracy and is home to nearly 1.3 billion citizens. The economy is among the top 10 percentile of fastest growing, and over the past 60 years, life expectancy has nearly doubled and adult literacy more than quadrupled.

Between 2005 and 2010, 53 million people were lifted out of poverty. The Hunger Project was established in India in 1984 and currently works across six states, with a focus enabling women to become effective and respected leaders in their communities.

The problem.

In 2010, 69% of India's population still lived on less than US \$2 a day, and 33% on less than US \$1.25 a day. Additionally, gender inequality is pervasive, and the ratio of girl children to boy children is decreasing. Educational attainment is low, and India holds one-third of the world's population who are illiterate.

The opportunity.

- India has a great strength in their constitutionally mandated elected village councils for meeting basic needs, based on ancient traditions of local self-government. Pioneering strategies that engage these councils, we mobilize people for self-reliant action, activating women as key change agents and engaging with local government through one comprehensive strategy, the Panchayati Raj Campaign.
- In 1992, the 73rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution mandated that one-third of all seats in panchayats (village councils) be reserved for women, bringing more than one million women into elected office.

What we do.

- Capacity building through Women's Leadership Workshops
- Activate the women electorate through pre-election SWEEP programming during state panchayat election cycles
- Form federations for deepening democracy and mutual empowerment
- Partner with local civil society organizations, state- and district-level federations to build alliances for advocacy and action.

At a glance: THP-India

- 9 million men women, and children reached through programs
- 17,223 Elected Women Representatives in Federation Building Workshops
- 38,513 adolescent girls attended bi-monthly advocacy meeting

Q4 2020

Forming an empowered women electorate in India.

To encourage voter participation among women and the election of women leaders to all panchayat seats, we work with partners across six states in India to conduct intensive pre-election SWEEP (Strengthening Women's Empowerment through Electoral Processes) programming. To make this work more effective, we focus our efforts during the fifth and final year of a state's panchayat election cycle. SWEEP programs include:

- Identification of potential leaders meetings
- Campaigns
- Film screenings
- Street plays
- Door-to-door engagement
- Trainings and distribution of educational posters and pamphlets

Gender equity starts with girls.

Our work in Bihar state in India, and the entire country, focuses on capacity building through facilitating Women's Leadership Workshops for women who have been elected to their local village councils so that they can meet the development needs of their communities. Our work in India has also broadened to include young girls, empowering them with life skills, focusing on health, gender and the importance of education. The Adolescent Girls Program holds monthly, bi-monthly and quarterly meetings reaching more than 67,000 girls.

**The
Hunger
Project.**

thp.org

110 W 30th St., 6th floor
New York, NY 10001 info@thp.org
+61 2 9222 9088 ABN: 45 002 569 271



Leadership development for elected women representatives and girls.

In early 2019, THP-India organized the Bihar State Level Convention. This 4-day event saw the participation of 100 elected women representatives (EWRs) from across Bihar along with 25 girls who were part of the state-run adolescent girls' program. This event was conducted primarily to build confidence among EWRs and provide them with information and knowledge about their key roles and responsibilities in their Panchayats. It is the first step towards transformative leadership.

Both the EWRs and the girls presented detailed manifestoes demanding that government authorities pay attention to their needs and concerns in the Panchayats, and protect their rights as equal citizens in a democracy. [Shapla](#) (pictured above) is still studying to become a teacher.

In 2020, THP-India in Bihar successfully advocated to ensure a functional helpline at the state level for women and children to report domestic violence and abuse, which had risen due to COVID-19 stay-at-home mandates.

Updated 14 April 2021